

# The Ex-Worker

## Transcript

**Alanis:** This is the Ex-Worker, with a special report on breaking news from Charlottesville, Virginia. At least one anti-racist protestor has died and at least nineteen were injured after an attendee of the “Unite the Right” fascist demonstration intentionally plowed his car into a crowd. The dust is still settling, but as we go to press, the one confirmed death is that of 32 year old Heather Heyer of Charlottesville. We want to dedicate this episode to Heather’s memory. We will not forget her, we will not forgive her murderers or their apologists, and we will continue the fight against fascism and all the structures of authority that nurture it.

In this episode, we’ll hear an in-depth interview with participants in the anti-fascist counter-demonstration, explaining what brought them to Virginia, what happened, and what we can do to show our solidarity. Next, we’ll share some short essays discussing the events that have appeared on the CrimethInc. blog, including “Charlottesville and the Rise of Fascism in the USA: What We Need to Do” and “One Dead in Charlottesville: Why the Right can Kill us Now.” We’ll conclude with some more reflections and updates about anti-fascist struggles and about the Ex-Worker. It’s been a while since our last episode, I know, but we thought it was vital to bring this report to all of you right away. You’ll be hearing much more from us in the near future.

My name is Alanis, and I’ll be your host. For a full transcript of this episode with links and more information, check out our website at [crimethinc.com/podcast](http://crimethinc.com/podcast), where you can also download any of our 55 previous episodes. For a list of solidarity demonstrations and ongoing updates, visit [crimethinc.com](http://crimethinc.com) or [itsgoingdown.org](http://itsgoingdown.org).

## BACKGROUND TO THE CHARLOTTESVILLE DEMONSTRATIONS

**Alanis:** The August 12th fascist demonstration in Charlottesville, Virginia didn’t come out of nowhere. The immediate impetus for the rally was the decision by the Charlottesville city council in February of this year to remove two Confederate statues and rename the downtown parks that had hosted them. Where did these

statues come from? Why have they become such a focal point of both anti-racist agitation and white supremacist reaction today?

Beginning in the late 1800s, former Confederates attempting to re-establish white domination after the defeat of Reconstruction in the Jim Crow South and beyond began a campaign to glorify the memory of the Confederacy through public monuments. Peaking in the 1920s and 30s, white supremacist community leaders and “philanthropists” paid to have statues such as the ones in Charlottesville erected all over the region. It’s important to keep in mind that the statues are not relics from the Confederate era put up in memory of the actual history of the war—in fact, dozens went up in states like Kentucky and Maryland that didn’t even join the Confederacy. Rather, they’re part of a concerted campaign by the rich decades after the fact to secure white supremacist rule.

The decision to remove the statues in Charlottesville came in response to [a campaign by anti-racist activists](#). Similar campaigns targeting statues and Confederate flags in public places have been waged across the country, often supported by graffiti and direct action. For many years, community activists had struggled to compel officials to remove racist monuments and rename parks and university buildings named after white supremacists, but often encountered substantial resistance with few successes. However, as anti-racist groups have grown in power and prominence over the past three years with the expansion of Black Lives Matter and anti-police rebellions, they have posed increasingly strong challenges to the visible remnants of the Confederacy’s racist legacy.

But the escalating racial tensions made visible through the anti-police rebellions have also emboldened white supremacists. The most dramatic early indication of this accelerating militant racism came in the mass shooting of nine people at a Black church in Charleston. Shooter Dylan Roof had intended to catalyze a race war, posting photographs of himself brandishing Confederate flags and other racist insignia. Here’s an excerpt from [Episode 40 of the Ex-Worker](#), in which we discussed how anti-racist struggles around Confederate statues and flags developed in South Carolina after the Charleston Massacre in 2015.

*Episode 40: In response, activists renewed their appeal to the state legislature to remove the Confederate flag from its official place on the grounds of the state capitol. In 1961, Democratic Governor Ernest Hollings had initiated legislation to raise the Confederate flag on the capitol grounds as a symbol of resistance to the civil rights movement. Despite the end of legal segregation, the flag stood, defying an NAACP tourism boycott since 2000.*

*On June 21, days after the Emanuel Church massacre, “Black Lives Matter” graffiti appeared on Confederate monuments in Charleston and elsewhere. On June 27, Black Lives Matter activist Brittany Ann Byuarim Newsome was arrested and charged with “defacing a monument” after climbing up the flagpole at the state capitol and removing the Confederate flag. Less than two weeks later, lawmakers voted to remove it from the State Capitol.*

*This demonstrates the power of direct action. The tourism boycott had been ineffective; so long as the state perceived no internal threat to order, it could afford to shrug off a few lost tourist dollars and the indignation of activists. But when uprisings elsewhere around the US dovetailed with local outrage, the willingness of a few individuals to break the law hastened a process that otherwise could have dragged on decades longer. The spectacle of a state claiming to oppose racism arresting an activist for removing an officially sanctioned symbol of racism from the headquarters of the state left the lawmakers no choice—especially after the Ku Klux Klan scheduled a rally at the capitol for July 18, threatening to create an additional spectacle of explicit racists outside the legislature allied with filibustering Republicans within. On July 9, the legislators voted to take down the Confederate flag, rebranding themselves as anti-racists. As in Ferguson and Baltimore, direct action had shifted the terrain, compelling officials to scramble to catch up.*

*Yet by focusing attention on removing the Confederate flag from the state capitol, activists had displaced rage against the racist murders in South Carolina onto a symbolic issue that legislators could address. The role of the Ku Klux Klan here aptly illustrates how extra-governmental white supremacist activity can be advantageous for the state.*

*This was the context in which Klan supporters, police, and protesters attending a black-organized counter-demonstration converged upon the state capitol grounds of Columbia, South Carolina on July 18, 2015. The Klan hoped to attract the attention of angry whites who felt victimized by recent victories against white supremacy; if they could present themselves as the sole remaining defenders of a flag and a tradition abandoned by the authorities, they could win new adherents for extra-governmental white supremacist organizing. The authorities hoped to preserve order, showing that they could control opponents of the state on both sides, in order to keep the state itself central for all seeking social change. The protesters, as usual, were divided between a variety of goals and methodologies; they ran the gamut from religious pacifists to black separatists to predominantly white anarchists.*

*The day ended in a rout for the Klan, with a multi-ethnic crowd including anarchists chasing them back to their cars and pelting them with projectiles as the overextended police struggled to protect them. More Klan members went to the hospital than protesters went to jail. The demonstrators had prevented the Klan from asserting an image of strength, hopefully discouraging dissatisfied white people from joining them. At the same time, compared to the events in Ferguson and Baltimore, the police had ceased to be the chief subject of the demonstrations; Dylann Roof, the controversy about the Confederate flag, and the Klan rally had shifted the subject away from policing and other normalized and fundamental aspects of the white supremacist power structure, towards exceptional and symbolic expressions of white supremacy. As social conflicts polarize and more and more people on both sides break off from state-based strategies, it will be especially important to continue confronting the institutionalized white supremacy of the state."*

**Alanis:** That analysis was written two years ago during the Obama Administration, when the extreme right positioned itself in clear opposition to the government. The Trump campaign, however, coalesced various white supremacist and fascist groups into support for national politics on a level unseen for decades. So this year, the autonomous right wing has focused energy recruiting less among those feeling anti-government resentment than among Trump supporters whose racism was more latent than explicit. This set the stage for seizing upon the Confederate monuments as a way to energize their core constituency while reaching beyond it for broader support.

While the KKK lost in the streets of Charleston two years ago, they had correctly identified the activist assault on Confederate monuments as a popular issue for their racist base. But while old-school white supremacists like the Klan lacked a broad appeal and digital organizing skills, the rising alt-right seized upon the controversy to catalyze a growing demographic of neo-fascists. Whereas before Trump's election they appeared to exist primarily as an online phenomenon, this year they've appeared in the streets in [New Orleans](#), [San Antonio](#), and other cities where conflicts over Confederate statues have erupted. In May, white nationalist Richard Spencer led a smaller rally in Charlottesville, putting the city on the map for fascists of many stripes. The KKK attempted a similar rally last month on July 8th, drawing about fifty racists opposed by over a thousand counter-protestors. (To listen to a reportback from the July 8th demonstration including an interview with attendees, check out the July 23rd episode of The Final Straw. We've got a link posted on our website, or you can find it yourself at [thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org](http://thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org).)

By contrast, the August 12th "Unite the Right" rally brought together an all-star team of alt-right celebrities. Longtime Charlottesville white supremacist Jason Kessler was the primary local organizer, participating

groups included Identity Europa, whose founder calls them the “SS of the alt-right” and includes many college students; newer neo-Nazi groups Vanguard America and Traditionalist Workers Party, and the old school Nazis of the National Socialist Movement. Speakers included infamous asshole Richard Spencer, who went viral getting punched in the face during the inauguration; Florida fascist Augustus Invictus, alt-right podcasters Mike Peinovich and Johnny Monoxide, livestreamer Baked Alaska, and a litany of other bigoted wingnuts. What sets them apart from their more traditional Klansman counterparts are technological savvy and skillful use of internet platforms, appropriation and inversion of the language of identity politics from other activist movements, and their greater success with making links with a wider range of “alt-lite” groups, conservatives on college campuses, and other internet reactionaries.

Arrayed against them were a wide range of anti-racists, ranging from local community activists to antifa groups to anarchists to religious groups to Black Lives Matter activists. As Trump’s presidency careens from disaster to disaster and his support appears to be eroding, the stage was set for a high stakes confrontation.

## INTERVIEW: AN ANONYMOUS ANARCHIST OF COLOR ON THE CHARLOTTESVILLE DEMONSTRATION

**Alanis:** We’ll kick off this episode with an interview with an anonymous anarchist of color who took part in the anti-fascist counter-demonstrations on the night of the 11th and the 12th. We’ll hear about the context of local organizing leading up to the march, insights about navigating strategies and tactics working alongside people with similar goals but different politics, some hair-raising stories about the courage of protestors standing up to Nazis in the streets, and reflections on the state of our movements.

**Clara:** Can you give us some background about how the rally and counter-demonstration were organized, and some local context for Charlottesville?

**Anonymous Anarchist of Color:** All right, so for a bit of context for Charlottesville—I can only speak for there, because that’s where I’ve lived and organizing for the last nine years—work that has been specifically anti-fascist has been most active in roughly the past six months. In the past year there was the formation of this group called “Unity and Security for America,” which was founded by Jason Kessler, who was the organizer of Unite the Right. They started with an anti-immigrant platform. And once he started catching news with a petition that he started to remove City Councilor Wes Bellamy for something that he had done in the past, a

group of us had decided that we wanted to stop any movement from him before he gathered any more steam as a clearly fascist organizer.

So a lot of this work was led by the local anarchist people of color collective. and we have been working very much on a platform of direct action and a strategy of no platform for white supremacy. Around that time was also the growth of the local chapter of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ), and that collective started working with them along those lines. And from then on was, well, at that time started the conversation around the removal of the Lee statue in the city. the city council had just voted to remove the statue, which galvanized a lot of racists in the area and in the nation. Fast forward to May, and there was a surprise rally organized by Identity Europa and Richard Spencer of the National Policy Institute, as well as other racist groups like League of the South, Traditionalist Workers Party, and other groups like that. They organized under the banner "You Will not Replace Us" in reference to the statues. A couple of members of APOC alongside members of SURJ went and confronted that rally, but we were in very small numbers. Later that night, the Nazis organized again another surprise rally which was \_\_ torchlit rally in front of the Lee statue. That image of the torchlit rally got a lot of attention for Jason Kessler and his folks, as well as the rise of this specific wave of white supremacist and white nationalism in the united states since trump's election. The APOC organizers made a point to confront Jason Kessler after these rallies everywhere he went, whether it was a smoothie shop, whether it was hanging with his buddies at a downtown bar, we would call on the community to show up and confront him. This was met with a lot of resistance from people who had this idea that if you just ignore the fascists, they will go away. However, particularly the organizers with APOC knew that this ignorant attitude was what precisely what helped them rise to power. Just a month after that May 13th rally it was announced that Kessler was organizing a rally on Aug 12th at Emancipation Park under the banner of United the Right. So that's sort of the context.

**Clara:** What kinds of conversations about strategy and tactics took place among folks opposed to the fascist rally?

**Anonymous Anarchist of Color:** Right. So there were a lot of heated internal conversations around how to confront the August 12th rally. APOC organizers and other white [accomplices](#) were pointing out that these Nazis come with a lot of violent intentions, just based on their online presence and actions; it was around that time when the attack happened in Portland. So a lot of that violence was fresh in our minds, and we wanted to make clear that under no circumstances were we going to allow that violence in our city, and we were going to defend ourselves by any means necessary. And so with that, a group of us wanted to establish

an agreement towards diversity of tactics that respected different tactics such as open carry as a deterrent of violence, anti-fascist blocs, blockading and basically any tactic that would go towards the goal of defending Charlottesville from fascism. People from SURJ, people even in the newly formed Black Lives Matter chapter, the clergy, liberal groups, progressive groups resisted that idea and that strategy very strongly, with the feeling that we would get bad press after the fact, that we would be putting people in harm unnecessarily, that people were not consenting to being confrontational. So that led to a lot of tensions that actually ended up in a lot of, for example, APOC organizing separately with anti-fascist networks from SURJ and BLM, and other groups that were not signing on to diversity of tactics.

**Clara:** While the main day of conflict was on Saturday the 12th, the night before the Nazis staged an unannounced torch-lit march to a statue of Thomas Jefferson. How did you find out about the march, and what happened?

Yeah. So the torch-lit march was exposed through leaks and anonymous hearsay. Even weeks before Aug 12th we knew that they were planning a torchlit march somewhere in town the Friday night before August 12th. We knew that this was something they were trying to keep secret, and we knew that this was an opportunity for the Charlottesville community to stand up to them and show them that we were not going to allow them to organize in secret again like they did on the night of May 13th. When the call came out on the day of for people to mobilize, there happened to be another call for a nighttime prayer at the church across the street from the rotunda, which is where we found out the Nazis were trying to have their rally. Organizers in the city gave them a heads up that the torchlit rally was going to happen at the same time, and we also organized to in whatever ways we could to disrupt the torchlight rally.

When group of anti-fascists and other organizers showed up, we observed that the torchlit rally had grown to over 300 participants, and at that same time we were also honestly very disorganized and scrambled with our comms, such that we weren't able to disrupt them en route to the rotunda. That said, local organizers had noted that UVA students all on their own had mobilized to defend the area, and they were numbered at roughly twenty. We were immediately concerned for their safety—there were about to be met with 300 Nazis at nighttime wielding torches.

We went to alert the St Paul's Church to alert any of the participants to come and help the students because they were extremely vulnerable at that time. The response we got was very defensive from the people at the church, that they didn't want to send people out, that the students were going to be all right—they basically



turned us away. So a couple of anti-fascist groups showed up at the last minute, to try to get to the scene before the torchlit rally reached them, but within a couple of minutes of that happening, the 300 Nazis arrived and entirely circled the students without letting them out. The students very, very bravely continued to chant "Black Lives Matter," continued to chant "No Nazis, No KKK, No Fascist USA," and refused to move despite the immediate threat of violence. As things got heated, the police continued to stand by observing the Nazis surround the students. And the Nazis began to pepper spray as has been shown in the pictures and throw torches at the students and lob torch fuel canisters at the students as well. Many of them were severely hurt, including a student in a wheelchair. And it only got broken up after basically the entire crowd had been maced and brutalized.

Shortly after that, medics mobilized and were able to help extract a lot of those students and to help clean the pepper spray, but it was clear that—the trauma was evident in everybody's faces. It was the pinnacle of the tension that had been building up through the summer between people who knew that direct action is necessary against Nazis and people who were not comfortable with that. So that's the breakdown of Friday night.

**Clara:** Tell us about what happened on Saturday.

**Anonymous Anarchist of Color:** So I personally I was doing comms [communications] for the network of anarchists and anti-fascists. we had come there with this strategy of organizing in affinity groups and having a very tight comms system so that even if affinity groups were spread throughout the area, we could very quickly tell each other what was going on. So we set up an outside location where we were able to have a dispatcher quickly communicate to others police mobilization and fascist mobilization so that we were able to, in the most effective manner, mobilize against the Nazi rally.

In the morning, the earliest action was organized by a group called Congregated People. They held a prayer in front of the only side of the park that police were allowing people to stand on, with the intention to then block the entrances into the park in an attempt to prevent the fascists from coming in. As their morning went on, the fascists made it very clear that they were going to head into Emancipation Park by any means necessary, and they were pushing their way through the clergy line to get into the park; this was around 10 am that this started happening. And the fascists were also pepper spraying people on the south side of the park as they were coming in. Closer to 11 AM was when the anti-fascist contingent mobilized from Justice Park. They were in the numbers of roughly 100 to 120. They came with shields, they came with flags, they came with



poles, they came with reinforced banners, they came with medics, they came with food, they came with everything that was necessary not only stop this gathering from happening but also protect people from the immanent violence of the Nazis. As it got closer to noon, the anti-fascist block was successful in drawing away the shielded contingents of Nazis; they were successful in drawing them away from the park and mak[ing] them more vulnerable. As that happened, many people were in the line of fire of projectiles, of pepper spray, of tear gas, and a lot of people were hurt and beaten on both sides. I can't speak for being on the ground but from what I observed on my streets, it was mostly Nazis who were getting beaten at that point.

So at that point speaking from the point of view of dispatch, we decided to hop onto Kessler's Periscope live feed, where he was rambling about the fact that police were not letting the speakers come into the park, and he was very, very upset about that because he understood that it was agreed that speakers would be allowed as early as 10 am. But a cop informed him that they would only be allowed after 12 because that was when the permit actually began. Shortly after that on his Periscope he noted that a police officer from the Charlottesville city police department was coming up towards the rally and the police officer informed them that, one, a state of emergency had been declared in Charlottesville; and two, that their gathering had been declared an unlawful assembly. He immediately got very upset and kept yelling, "I have a permit," and his security started moving him out. Because we were able to catch that in dispatch, we were also able to communicate that to folks on the ground, and they were able to mobilize immediately. And we were also that Kessler was planning to move to McIntyre park as a backup.

It was during this dispersal that some of the more violent hand-to-hand clashes happened, and as the Nazis were leaving the area and Charlottesville residents alongside anti-fascists from all over the US demonstrated to them that they were not welcome. They were chased up to their parking lots, they were chased down towards McIntyre, and through leaks in their internal chat, the Nazis had admitted that they were defeated and that they should seek refuge as soon as possible.

Shortly after, as the dispersal was happening and violent clashes continued, we were informed that a group of fascists were headed to Friendship Court. Friendship Court, also known as \_\_\_ Square, is a subsidized housing neighborhood that is predominantly black and low-income. So once we got the news at comms, we spread it quickly teams that they should mobilize from north of downtown to south of downtown to help protect that neighborhood. Within that time frame, people mobilized very quickly and got together a march of roughly 200–300 people to march down to Friendship Court. In that time frame (which is honestly unclear to

me from having seen it all from dispatch) as people were crossing the downtown mall heading south on to 4th street, and out of nowhere, a dark gray car ran through the crowd, which resulted in many injuries and one death. This event has been heavily publicized so I won't go into much detail about that, except for the fact that the first state responder to that crash was a militarized police vehicle, an armored police vehicle where an armored cop popped up from the top and pointed his gun at the crowd surrounding the area. The ambulance got there after the cop showed up.

So after that event, various groups started to try to mobilize out of the area as medics continued to help to take care of those who were heavily traumatized by the attack on the march. And to summarize since then: a lot of people have been showing lots of support, with solidarity actions across the globe at this point, and lots of funds for those injured, which we need to keep pushing to make sure they're taken care of. And we also have continued to love each other and take care of each other in the face of this act of fascist violence. But also in love with each other for showing the fascists that we won that day and we were able to kick them out and keep them from having their rally. So that's my breakdown from my point of view.

**Clara:** Are there things that our listeners can do to support folks who put their bodies on the line in Charlottesville this weekend and support the ongoing struggle?

**Anonymous Anarchist of Color:** Yes, sort of three main things. One is solidarity actions: organize rallies, organize community defense, organize anything that will shut down the fascists and keep them from organizing any further. The second thing is the fundraising; there are many vouched funds that are going around Facebook, social media, and I will say that some of the vouched ones are the Democratic Socialists of America funds and then the individual funds as well as the Antifa Southern Hills funds are all funds that will be used for those injured and traumatized. I will also say that a lot of those fascists came there unmasked and very clearly showed their faces, which leaves an opportunity to expose them for those who have access to online research tools, and that way we can prevent them from organizing any further. So those are my three main asks.

**Clara:** What lessons have you learned from the demonstrations in Charlottesville this weekend?

**Anonymous Anarchist of Color:** Lessons learned are that no city big or small is going to be exempt from white supremacist violence, so we must prepare. And what preparation looks like is building relationships, it's building community; but also building actual tactical strategies around communication networks, medical

care, trauma care, mental health care, care and defense for those in most marginalized communities, like poor black communities. So those are some lessons learned, that all of us have a duty to prepare. And also that all of us have to be very frank with each other about our comfort zones and what we mean when we say that we want to dismantle white supremacy in very specific ways; because we can all organize around banners of dismantling white supremacy, but when it means very different things to different people, and they are not clear about what that means, it can bring up a lot of tension that can be very harmful to anti-fascist organizing.

**Clara:** What do you think our experiences in Charlottesville this weekend can tell us about anti-fascism and the state of our movements?

**Anonymous Anarchist of Color:** Right. So for the state of our movement, one positive is that it showed that anti-fascist action is not limited to a punk black bloc aesthetics. It looks like all of us; it can look like all of us and it should look like all of us. We had Charlottesville residents joining in to the action in ways that we never thought were possible, and we need to recognize that in our organizing so that we are not casting away those who would actually stand on the front lines with us. So on the positive, it shows that people from different stripes and backgrounds can stand together in those tense moments.

On the more constructive [criticism] side, it showed that even people who claim to be against white supremacy and put forward language that they will put their bodies on the line are still not ready to do so. And for that, again, I say that we need to continue preparing and continue having those tough conversations so that we can build that comfort for what's inevitable in the atmosphere we are in.

**Clara:** Is there anything else you'd like to add?

**Anonymous Anarchist of Color:** Umm... Smash fascism!

**Clara:** Terrific. Thank you so much for sharing your experiences with us, and for all you've done to support this struggle.

**Anonymous Anarchist of Color:** OK, thank you very much!

SEP: ##ESSAY: CHARLOTTESVILLE AND THE RISE OF FASCISM IN THE USA

**Clara:** Next, we'll share a piece that appeared on the CrimethInc. blog in the immediate aftermath of the Charlottesville demonstration, titled, ["Charlottesville and the Rise of Fascism in the USA: What We Need to Do."](#)

**Alanis:** On Friday, August 11, a wide range of far-right groups from around the US gathered in Charlottesville, Virginia for a march the night before their "Unite the Right" rally. Hundreds of them carrying lit torches paraded across the town with very little visible police presence. The streets were largely empty, thanks to a request from Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe. When the march arrived at a Confederate statue ringed by a few dozen counterprotesters, the men with torches surrounded it and attacked them.

Until now, some of the participants have been coy about their politics. Now that they have all joined in explicitly fascist chants like "blood and soil" while many of them raised their arms in the Nazi salute, it is clear that all of them—the so-called Alt Right, the Proud Boys, and all the militiamen and Oathkeepers and basement-dwelling trolls who keep them company—are openly endorsing fascism. They aim to create a situation in which they can terrorize and murder with impunity in order to create an even more white supremacist, even more totalitarian state.

With this march in Charlottesville, the far right has crossed a threshold. Until now, they appeared to be a motley array of online groups, most of which lacked the courage to identify unironically with fascism. Today, they have arrived as a social movement that can pull together hundreds of people to carry out organized acts of violence while the police look on. They hope to weaponize the ignorance and insecurity of the precarious white working class to trick poor white people into serving once again as cannon fodder for their own oppressors.

But it's not too late—not yet, anyway. The fascists are coming to prominence before they have the numbers or legitimacy in the public eye that they need to defend their new position. If we act swiftly and decisively—giving them neither legitimacy nor quarter—there is still time to stop them before they move the clock from 2017 to 1933.

Remember last November, when Donald Trump was elected and it seemed like the entire US was about to veer into a far-right dictatorship? While liberals were immobilized by shock, anarchists immediately went on the offensive in order to destabilize the Trump regime before everyone got accustomed to a new level of tyranny. We recognized that the far right had come to power too early, before they could build a broad

consensus in favor of their agenda, and that this put them in a vulnerable position. By acting decisively against the inauguration and the Muslim ban, we helped to show that there could be no business or politics as usual under Trump, and this created fractures within the halls of power.

If not for these immediate, massive expressions of defiance, judges might not have dared to block the Muslim ban, or White House employees to leak information. Imagine the US right now if Trump were ruling with the full apparatus of the state united behind him! Instead, today, the US government seems more dysfunctional than ever. That may explain why Trump is threatening war to shore up his position, while fascists are no longer counting on his government to carry out their agenda under cover of normalcy.

Now we have to use the same strategy to forestall the threat of a new widespread fascist movement in the US. We have to respond immediately, cutting its oxygen supply and blocking its growth. But how do we do that?

First, we can't accord fascists any legitimacy. One network described them as "white activists" last night. Such euphemisms are inappropriate for people giving the Nazi salute. It must be clear to everyone that they are not attempting to participate in a dialogue, but rather seeking to start a war.

By the same token, we must not look to the police or any other aspect of the state for deliverance. The complicity of the police in supporting one fascist undertaking after another is well-established by now. Besides, anything the state does against the far right, we can be sure it will do to us twice as hard. It would be a mistake to give anyone the impression that state intervention could solve this problem without creating even bigger problems. If history is any guide, whatever power the state is accorded will eventually end up in the hands of fascists.

We also can't defer to authorities like Governor McAuliffe when they tell us to respond to the situation by hiding indoors. In effect, this means ceding the streets to the fascists, in which to do whatever they want to whomever is still out there. Recommending this strategy makes Governor McAuliffe complicit in the rise of fascism. Sticking our heads in the sand will not make this situation go away.

Likewise, it won't help to gather in churches, as some did in Charlottesville last night, congratulating ourselves on how nonviolent we are while fascists patrol the streets. Last night, when the church locked its doors, many were trapped outside, dramatically outnumbered. This kind of behavior is also complicity.

It's essential to build fighting formations capable of facing down far-right violence. Fascists love to portray themselves as victims in order to claim the right to do violence to others; their entire narrative is built around the contradiction that they are simultaneously master race and underdog, victorious and persecuted. They treat any resistance to their program as an affront to their dignity and a violation of their safe space. Nonetheless, we have to be able to stop them in their streets. Any footage they can record of successful attacks, however cowardly, will help them recruit from their base of bullies and sadists. Because of this, it is preferable not to enter into conflict with them except when fully prepared—but at all costs, we must not let them attain control of the streets.

Most of this is not a matter of physical confrontation. We need people to put up posters; we need people to hand out handbills, and form local organizations, and coordinate neighborhood response teams. We need to organize legal support for those arrested fighting fascists and institutions like the US border that are already accomplishing their stated goals. We need people to infiltrate their groups; we need to set up fake online accounts with which to monitor them or spread disinformation and strife. We need to identify the fault lines along which their alliances can be split, and open gulfs between them and the rest of the right wing. One can do a great deal to fight fascism without ever entering a gym.

As in our efforts against the Trump administration, we can't take on fascism alone. We have to make sure that we are part of a much broader movement, yet that our efforts are not diluted or reduced to some lowest common denominator.

Above all, we have to popularize another set of values, so that the cheap victim narratives and fantasies of authority that fascists offer can gain no traction among the general public. We have to show how fulfilling it is to treat each other as equals, rather than serving simultaneously as a peon and a petty tyrant in a chain of command. We have to distinguish true self-determination from supposed self-determination for "nations" or "peoples," which always boils down to being bossed around by someone of your own ethnicity or religion. We have to foster a sense of self-worth that is not based in membership in invented categories, but in our personal relationships and values and accomplishments.

In the growing popularity of fascism, we can see the failure of guilt-based liberal anti-racism and anti-sexism. Mere privilege politics have failed us; we have to show what everyone stands to gain from the abolition of whiteness and patriarchy, and to present this as a positive program rather than as nothing more than the elimination of unfair advantages. However unfair an advantage is, someone is bound to want to keep it—we

have to convey that there's nothing whiteness or male domination can offer that is worth having in the first place, compared to the genuine intimacy and care that are possible when we approach each other as equals, without borders or abstract criteria of belonging.

This is the opposite of pandering to the supposed ignorance or self-interest of "the white working class," as if that were a single entity. On the contrary, it means appealing to what is wisest and most honorable in all people.

Anarchism is one of the most thoroughgoing forms of opposition to fascism, in that it entails opposition to hierarchy itself. Virtually every framework that countenances hierarchy, be it democracy or "national liberation," enables old power imbalances like white supremacy and patriarchy to remain in place, hidden within the legitimacy of the prevailing structures. Under democracy, white supremacy has not disappeared; it has just disguised itself. If we want to be done with fascism once and for all, we have to cut to the root of things.

In that regard, we can see the struggle ahead of us as an opportunity to challenge everything about our society and ourselves, not just the violence of a radical fringe group. As society polarizes and things escalate, we should not simply be drawn into a violent grudge match with our opposite numbers on the far right, but look for escape hatches through which all humanity might escape from this long nightmare.

## INTERVIEW: TWO VIRGINIA ANARCHISTS ON THE CHARLOTTESVILLE DEMONSTRATION

**Alanis:** We'll go now to a joint interview conducted after the demonstration on the night of August 12th in Charlottesville with two Virginia anarchists who were there in the streets. They share their experiences with the day's protest, lessons learned, and thoughts about where the struggle against fascism is headed.

**Clara:** So first off, thanks so much for speaking with us today! Could you tell us who you are and why you felt compelled to go out and protest the Unite the Right rally on August 12th?

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** So I am a graduate student here at the University of Virginia. I'm not super involved with political actions in the community, because I spend most of my time being a graduate student, which is a big time suck. But this came onto my radar because the KKK came to Charlottesville last month, and I didn't go



to that rally because I wasn't in town, but the reaction and the community response I thought was really positive. And based on that, this was really worth going to.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** As for me, I'm a fairly recent transplant to Virginia. I was living up in the mountains for the last two years, and I recently moved to Richmond to go back to school. All the time I've been a full human and have been thinking about things in a political or social sense, I've considered myself an anarchist and a militant of sorts, and always militantly anti-fascist. You know, growing up in a punk scene, we hated Nazis right from the start. And I grew up in central Pennsylvania with the Keystone State Skinheads and some pretty violent skinhead groups who would try to recruit from our communities. So we grew up running them out of shows and chasing them around town. So just basically being in proximity to any fascist or neo-Nazi gathering, I feel a responsibility to be there and say *fuck no*. Not only with my privilege stand up and counter white supremacy, but also because I think fascist politics are anti-working class and are detrimental to me as well.

**Clara:** So basically what happened on Saturday? What did you see?

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** So yeah, the day of the Unite the Right rally, we rallied in Justice Park around 9 AM with a smattering of different anti-fascist groups. We massed our numbers there...

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** There were also Quakers for Peace there when we started out.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Oh, that's true.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** At first I was like, oh it's all anti-fascists here, really militant people. And then a little bit later I noticed the Quakers for Peace and some other kind of really low key older folks.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Yeah. Then I think around 10 AM the anti-fascists decided that it was time to go down to Emancipation Park and get in position. I think most of expected there not to be many fascists there yet because their event was supposed to start at noon. But it appeared as though almost all of the white-shirted groups, Identity Europa and the alt-right, were already in the park when we arrived. We had a pretty triumphant entrance, I think; we made a pretty loud entrance. Took position, basically occupying the whole block closest to the Charlottesville downtown mall, in between the park and the mall.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** The mood was not that tense at that point.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Yeah. So once we arrived at the park, the fascists had the high ground. There was a ring of three percenter militias dispersed ten feet apart around us. the police were hanging back everywhere. The mood was aggressive, but just verbal, just a back and forth. things felt pretty under control. There was a lot of media milling about and such. And then things really started to kick off and direct physical confrontations started once the National Socialist Movement and other explicit Nazi groups started marching in formation into the park area. We moved to an intersection which would block their route, and as soon as they got close to us fights started—they started shoving and punching right away, and obviously we responded in kind in self-defense. That evolved into there being a sort of tunnel into the park, that the fascists were sort of allowed through, but there were intermittent scuffles through all that. And eventually that evolved into, once all of the fascists had gotten into the park, they were penned in by the police barricades, And I think we kind of realized we actually held the power in that situation. Basically, anti-fascists were hurling projectiles and insults and paint bombs and heavier objects, and fighting really physically with some of the National Socialist Movement that had a lot of shields and weapons. But we kept our physical confrontation and stayed really unified; we had lots of banners and were really unified with all different anti-fascist groups who were at that intersection, and kept the fight up for about an hour to the point where I think the alt-right and neo-Nazi groups got sick of it and I think destroyed the police barricade on the other side of the park and escaped out the back. And shortly after that the police fired tear gas to disperse us and moved us a few blocks away.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** So it wasn't so much that we physically chased them out of the park with our bodies; it was more like we emotionally chsed them out of the park.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** They just got sick of fighting.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** Yeah, which is more like an emotional exhaustion.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Yeah. I guess they're just weak minded.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** They are. So the next hour was pretty low key. We were back in Justice Park.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Yeah, I think everybody was kind of wandering around and then re-masked there.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** So we went back there, regrouped, and then we decided to start marching again, right?

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Well, there was a rumor that the alt-right was going to try to march into some housing projects close to the downtown mall.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** Kind of on the opposite side of the downtown mall. So we were prepared to get involved with that and have their backs. so we had our big group back together, we all started marching over there. And made our way over there, chanting the whole time. And then we got there, and I think an organizer from DC got on a loudspeaker and apparently got word from the community that everybody feels like they have this under control; they can hold their own, they're not really that concerned about it. It's giving them some anxiety with this many people being over here, I guess?

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Right, I think, yeah.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** I mean, that's frightening when people come into your neighborhood, no matter what side they're on, I guess.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Yeah, I think we were a largely outside force to that neighborhood, so...

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** So then we were like, OK, they have it under control. And at this point we were alone, there weren't any police...

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** And at that point I think we all spontaneously decided that we were going to occupy some space in the downtown mall and celebrate what we perceived as victory.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** Right. So we headed back for the downtown mall, and right as we were coming down Water Street, a whole other group—I don't even know where that group came from...

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** It seemed like more Black Lives Matter activists than our group, but also other anti-fascist groups, and I think some more Wobblies and other groups.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** It was this huge mass of two groups converging and walking down Water Street.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Our numbers were huge, the mood was ecstatic...

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** we had that street filled and were marching down and chanting, and yeah, pretty much everyone felt victorious at that point, and there was a very strong sense of community. No one was angry;

everybody was just stoked.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** People were getting out of their cars and getting out and hanging with us and cheering...

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** Right, because there was traffic on that street. I guess, yeah, probably most of the alt-right people had gone elsewhere at this point, because we were without them; there was no sign of them around. So they were probably feeling anger at something along the lines of defeat.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** We had pushed them out of the park; they had dispersed, for what we could tell.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** So I am assuming that what happened is that a frustrated alt-right person—man—and decided to go down that one side street that's open to traffic, with the intention of harming people, of either murdering or injuring people. Luckily, he only killed one person. So far.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Yeah.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** So he, you know, plowed into us, and it was sort of pandemonium. What I noticed—so I didn't really even realize that there was a car yet—I was hearing glass shattering before I even understood that there was a car in this mass of people, which I guess was people smashing windows immediately.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Well, yeah, I became aware of the sound first, too. It sounded like a car accident happening, but it was people being hit by this car.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** And they did rear end a car that was parked in the middle of the street.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Because we had taken the street over, and there were a few cars that were stuck.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** The moment people were hitting the ground, people were picking them up.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** And creating space for people who were unresponsive or couldn't move, and there was immediately our medics on scene.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** It was a really instantaneous—before I even understood what was happening, people were picking people up.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Right. And the people who were more seriously injured were being immobilized and being treated as best as we were equipped to do it right away. And then the police response was insanely slow for the presence in the area, and the emergency response, which was also in the area, was also even slower. And we happened to be standing on the sidewalk as the car came tearing through the crowd. It went past us.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** There was really no definition of the sidewalk versus the street of where we were, but we were off to the side.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** We just luckily happened to have stepped off the street and were walking on the sidewalk instead at that time... It was kind of pandemonium. And once, I think someone immediately tried to respond to disable the driver once we realized what was happening, like, oh shit, he's going to try to back up. He then forwarded up the street in reverse and then left. But we, I quickly realized we needed to get off that street, because he could come back, and... Yeah, you can't win a fight with a car. Then we kind of regrouped with some friends and then left.

I think of all the things we were ready for on this day, which was basically...

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** Gun violence, and fist violence.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Yeah, fighting with fascists in pretty much any capacity. And while fascists are no strangers to lots of cowardly acts of violence against vulnerable groups, you know, I don't think anyone expected someone to drive a car at full speed into...

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** Yeah, it was completely, it was so shocking... Everyone was immediately afraid and was like, where am I safe? I'm not safe here, I'm not safe over here. I felt like no one felt safe anywhere the moment that happened.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Yeah, and it was just going from such joy and a feeling of victory to witnessing such a...

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** Horrific.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Horrific act of violence, something that really crushes the human spirit to see, that an individual could have so little regard for other humans' lives.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** But I don't think any... I guess I'm basing this off of our personal reaction, [which] was, we did the right thing coming here, regardless of the fact that this just happened and we were so close to this and that could have been us. We still were like, we did the right thing and we feel right about coming out today. I didn't hear *anyone* having any sign of regret for taking a stand.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** No. I think... I don't want to exploit such an awful situation for my own views. But if anything it's a reflection of how serious our work in confronting fascists is. Because we're not responsible for the rise of the far right and the acts of violence they perpetrate. This is a very logical conclusion to months or a year of the far right talking about acting out violence towards people of color and queer folks and women and leftists and anarchists and anti-fascist organizers, and this seems like a very logical conclusion. I think a lot of us who've been following the rise of the far right recently [believe that] these people are going to start committing acts of murder. You know, as they always have, but more frequently and more brazenly. Yeah, this seems like a very logical conclusion, and is affirming our need to confront fascists militantly and without hesitation.

**Clara:** What was the makeup of the fascist side and the anti-fascist side? What kind of presence was there on each side?

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** I mean, it was hard to put a count on the fascists, because a lot of them had assembled at Justice Park and they had the high ground, and we were down lower on the street and couldn't really see. It was definitely—I would put the number north of 500 fascists. It was a huge gathering. The makeup of that seemed to be a pretty equal split of white-shirted alt-right and Identity Europa type groups and Nazi regalia-dressed National Socialist Movement, and they also seemed to be very bonded with the Southern Nationalists, or Southern Revivalists, I don't know what to call them exactly. they seemed to be much more integrated with the typical neo-Nazi. But you know it was very clear that all of those groups were coming together into some kind of neo—I think we're in some kind of fascist primordial stew right now. And that was really evident that there is a cohesive movement growing among the far right.

As far as anti-fascist counter protesters, it seemed like there was a number of local groups that brought together the organizing here, ranging from antifa chapters from across the region to Showing Up for Racial Justice, which is a group here in Charlottesville; Black Lives Matter in Charlottesville and Richmond, I believe, helped organize this; and Charlottesville Solidarity I think was the other group. As far as the anti-fascist people on the ground, it was a really wonderful mix of anti-fascist squads, Black Lives Matter activists, you

know, really working together very cohesively it seemed. The Democratic Socialists were on the ground in a pretty militant capacity, which was cool, and worth a shout-out. Redneck Revolt was there in smaller numbers and seemed to stay off the back, but they were armed. And as someone who enjoys shooting occasionally and feels comfortable with firearms but doesn't necessarily believe in armed struggle or using guns in our social struggle, I would say that I felt actually very comforted by having Redneck Revolt there, even though they very responsibly hung back and were not at all part of the confrontations with the Nazis, it was nice to know—for me, I felt very comfortable knowing that we had some firepower on our side if things for whatever reason spiraled in an awful direction. That was interesting and actually made me feel better, because I forgot to mention that there was a pretty large Oath-Keepers presence here; they seemed to be coordinating with or at least tolerated by the state police pretty directly. And they were positioned basically encircling the anti-fascist contingent once we arrived at Justice Park. It was a really unnerving situation being surrounded by far right-wing militia groups who were armed with semiautomatic weapons. So I think that's basically the numbers.

As far as numbers for anti-fascists, maybe we had the upper hand? I would put it upwards of 500, too. Certainly [at] the large march at the end of the day before the incident with the car, we were well over 1000; the group had ballooned really significantly at that point, because we were in a march of about 500 that combined with another march of about 500, and we were taking the streets and moving towards the downtown mall.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** In terms of people who were there today, there were young militant people, there were families—I saw a few parents there with their kids. But I feel like there was a really broad assortment. And then you know: so basically ages 7 to 77.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Yeah. I saw a remarkable number of middle-aged women in femme holding black flags on big sticks....

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** Yeah, militant middle-aged women!

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Black, brown, white, men, women, trans, queer; we were a really diverse and unified group today.

**Clara:** What were some of the most surprising things throughout the day?



**Virginia Anarchist 1:** Yeah, so this is a combination of a surprise and something that I expected to happen that didn't happen. Like I said before, I just am—maybe this is not even an expectation, but a wish: we were not in the wrong, and yet the police were not protecting us in the least. I was so floored! When these skirmishes were happening, they stood by, they just stood and watched. They were positioned behind us. The skirmishes were happening between us and these Nazis, and there just standing in a parking lot watching, being completely useless. And when they weren't being useless, they had their backs to the Nazis and were facing us, as in, we are defending the Nazis from y'all...

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Yeah, I think if there was ever there was a question of whose side the police were on, today showed it pretty starkly. They went out of their way to facilitate the Nazis being able to have this big jamboree in the city, and when they were watching Nazis assault groups, a really diverse group of people who—we held our own, but are citizens of this city, as these Nazis are not.. Yeah, they stood by and watched. It's no surprise, because we know that the police serve a white supremacist power structure and have common interests with Nazis in a lot of cases, but I can see how it was shocking probably for some people to see for a lot of people who have higher expectations of the police to serve the community.

My most surprising takeaway, having dealt with neo-Nazi skinheads in the past and remembering them being really terrifying, was just how cowardly these really tough looking and large white men were. Like when we confronted them today, most of them wouldn't respond, most of them wouldn't make eye contact. Most of them were very passive and very scared, and I think they're pretty terrified of us. I think we're better at fighting in the street, because a lot of us have been involved in a lot of other struggles over the years. But I think also it's that I think that the world we want to live in, the reason why we are opposed to fascism, is a much more compelling worldview to hold, and so I think that we have something more to fight for than they do. They're bitter and jaded and holding on to a white male identity that is antiquated at this point and is dying out—as it should. While it is terrifying to confront violence and possibly death in the streets and in our organizing work to oppose these people, it is far more terrifying to face a fascist future. And I think that the world that we're fighting for, it's worth more to us. I think we're strong together and we have something to say together. I think we scare the shit out of them

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** Yeah, I was actually surprised by that. It wasn't even at the front of my mind.

**Clara:** What would you say to people who are horrified by white supremacist organizing and violence but who might be scared of militant resistance to it? How can anti-fascists and anarchists better connect with people

like that?

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** So when it comes to getting people who are less militant, and who are afraid of militant actions against violent groups like this, I think... I identify as that kind of person. I am not—my forte is not street fighting... That's like an understatement! we're always having this debate about accessibility of this movement and I feel like it is so important to get anyone and everyone on board with this now, because what we're up against is really frightening.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** And I think partly it's a necessity of organizing in a smaller city like Charlottesville that doesn't necessarily have a wide or large radical community to it. But I think it's also it's, right, we need to get anyone and everyone we can involved with building a united front against fascism. Because you can look at history and see that when anti-fascist movements have succeeded, they've done it by street level militancy, but also building broad coalitions that will involve people who are willing to get involved at any level. Because, right, not everyone wants to fight in the streets but that doesn't mean that you can't help fight fascism. Because you can do it in lots of different ways, by even just spreading ideas, but also all kinds of behind the scenes support, or nonviolent protest, or, you know, however you choose to do it. I mean, we need to fight on all fronts, ideologically and physically. And so I think that, while it may have been a necessity here, I think it was really beautiful the way everyone came together. Nobody policed each other; everyone respected each others' space, and everyone had each other's backs on the streets today.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** It was really positive.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** It was, yeah. Despite the awful tragedy of the day and how heartbreaking the end of the day was—up until that point, we took some abuse, but we sure as shit gave it to the fascists and I think chased them out. I think they lost the day overall, despite their cowardly act of murder.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** Right. It is scary, but if you feel strongly about it, you should show up. If you don't show up when these groups come to town, you're complicit, you're sending this message like I am indifferent about your message. Or even not indifferent, but I agree or I don't have anything to say about it. And I think there are so many people who are opposed who don't have that sentiment. I mean, everyone I'm close to here doesn't have that sentiment, but didn't necessarily come today. And I think in the future, maybe they would. But I think it's important, like I said before, it's important to have that power in numbers. And it also sends a message to anyone, not just to alt-right people like I'm not OK with that, but any person —like mayors,

governors, any person in power—I think its important to send that message. And the reason I came out today is to show people who are being oppressed or subjugated that I'm on their side. And that that kind of hateful rhetoric isn't acceptable.

**Clara:** What kinds of lessons can we take from Saturday? Do you have any advice for towns or regions that face fascist gatherings in the future?

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Yeah, I think the biggest thing—and I think this was pretty well executed in Charlottesville—is to remember that anti-fascism is community self defense. and it's not just about getting to fight Nazis in the street, you know. It is about getting to defend our broad communities and cities and towns that we live in from a very real and violent threat. so we should be inclusive, give ourselves space to fight but also, yeah, engage the community in a broader sense to educate and mobilize people. Because having a future worth living depends on it.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** What I thought was actually the most exciting thing to see today and sort of heartwarming and made me feel really good about this movement was the number of street medics that there were. I feel like we were really, really prepared for injuries and things to go awry. And people were so quick to just yell medic and medics would pop up. I feel like that response was really amazing and shows organization... The other side didn't have that. There's no way! And I think that's really a powerful statement.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Yeah! We care about each other. that's why we're in this. Yeah, I think there were lots of little things. What I was most struck by today was just the spontaneous solidarity that everyone showed together in the street. Lots of different groups that maybe haven't participated in actions before were really acting pretty cohesively. We could communicate better; we could coordinate better between different squads and different groups.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** But it was really good overall.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** There could have been more scouts today to keep track of some of the fascist groups, but we did a good job of staying together.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** Considering what a rag-tag army it sort of seemed like, I think it was really cohesive.

So I think that today shows us that we, there's a lot that we can't count on, and a lot of that does boil down to capitalism and our power structure. You saw Trump's response to this, which obviously is meaningless drivel. We can't count on the police, we can't really count on any elected government officials, and I think this is really telling of how important a grassroots type response to this is, in terms of what we've been talking about, like educating the community and having a really strong community response across the board with a diversity of people.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** I think that for myself as an anarchist, if I believe in, we believe in as anarchists self-determination and mutual aid and direct action, that today shows that not only is it what we believe in for the world we want, it's also a necessity, because the state won't help us fight fascists. In fact they'll facilitate them, and we need to be able to count on ourselves to do everything. We need to be able to fight, we need to be able to take care of each other and support each other before, during and after actions.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** And we're seeing that right now, it is happening...

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** We're building that.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** With the small responses today, with greater responses like fundraising campaign pops up and earns thousands of dollars in an evening...

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** And we saw instantly international solidarity demos in Sweden and England and all over the United States; that made me tear up to see anti-fascist groups all over the world—we're an international movement, we have each other's backs.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** And even not anti-fascist groups, they're having a vigil in cities across the country either tonight or tomorrow night, there's dozens of cities that are like, oh, this is in solidarity with Charlottesville. And they're, these vigils aren't necessarily anti-fascists doing this. I think we're all on the same page that what happened today was terrible and scary and worth acknowledging and worth standing in solidarity with.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** As far as the social and economic conditions that are giving rise to a far-right neo-fascist movement in the United States: we could spend a whole lot of time talking about this, but I think it is a combination of the declining influence of white males in the world in conjunction with the meaninglessness of life in late capitalism and the disaffection that that's creating, and also falling living standards, and falling expectations for the future. And I think the far right is really good at creating racial...

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** Scapegoating.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Scapegoating groups in order to gain a following to push through their really repugnant beliefs. And ultimately what they want is complete and total control for white males over everyone else, and megalomaniac leaders to head that. and this is where the anarchist vision for our future is really a starkly different response to what neo-fascists offer, you know. They offer a violent and individualist and lonely solution to the problems we face as humanity. As anarchists, we envision a future of cooperation and voluntary association and respect for life among humans and the planet and, yeah, of just cooperation and building a world based on harmony and not exploitation and domination.

**Virginia Anarchist 1:** Right. You covered it, you're good.

**Virginia Anarchist 2:** Yeah. We want to build a beautiful world. We don't want to be ruled by anyone else.

## ESSAY: ONE DEAD IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

**Alanis:** Next, we'll share another analysis published by CrimethInc., reflecting on the context that enabled the alt-right to escalate into murderous violence this weekend. It's called, ["One Dead in Charlottesville: Why the Right Can Kill Us Now."](#)

**Clara:** Today, in Charlottesville, Virginia, participants in a fascist rally did what they have been threatening to do for a long time, driving a car into a crowd and murdering at least one person.

We are not surprised.

At Standing Rock in November, police nearly blew off the arm of 21-year-old Sophia Wilanksy with a concussion grenade.

The North Dakota legislature responded not by condemning police violence, but by introducing a bill that would make it legal for drivers to run over protestors.

At an anti-fascist demonstration in Seattle in January, coinciding with Trump's inauguration, an alt-right assaulter shot Hex, an unarmed anti-fascist protestor and IWW member, in the stomach, sending him to the

hospital for weeks. Police initially responded by declining to charge the shooter with a crime, while continuing to condemn and repress anti-fascist demonstrators.

After the Seattle shooting, we wrote that the alt-right “is actively working to create momentum for a fascist movement that will not stop short of murder.”

Today’s murder of an anti-fascist protestor is the first to take place during a demonstration. It is probably not the last.

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And as our friends lie bleeding in the streets and cold in the morgue, as unapologetic neo-Nazi violence escalates to a level not seen in decades, Charlottesville Mayor Mike Signer tells us to “go home.” He cannot bring himself to say, “A neo-Nazi murdered someone fighting against white supremacy while I stood and did nothing.” So he diplomatically mentions that “a life was lost”—like a misplaced set of keys, rather than a horrific and deliberate act of racist violence.

The discourse of “law and order” functions the same way, whether from the mouths of liberals like Mayor Signer or authority-worshipping Blue Lives Matter zealots. It is intended to play on our fears of violence and chaos to convince us that the only alternative is to accept the economic, political, and racial status quo, defended by ever-escalating control and surveillance.

But we have to realize that their laws and their order are precisely what produced this situation—a situation in which pipeline company profits are worth more than the lives of water protectors, in which cops murder black men with impunity, in which torch-wielding Nazis can murder those who organize to halt their racist agenda.

We must identify the forces underlying their laws and their order—white supremacy, patriarchy, policing, capitalism, and the state. We have to work together to keep ourselves safe and reimagine the world without them.

No, we will not go home. We will not forget. And if we can ever forgive, it will only be when we have ensured that no policeman or fascist will ever again be able to cause the slightest bit of harm to any living thing.

See you in the streets.

## ESSAY: FROM J20 TO CHARLOTTESVILLE

**Alanis:** And finally, we’ll share another essay connecting the different strategies used by the right wing in recent years to crack down on resistance movements, how they led to Charlottesville, and what the right wing war on protest tells us about our struggles. It’s titled, “From J20 to Charlottesville: Repressing Protest From Above and Below.”

**Clara:** From J20 to Charlottesville: Repressing Protest from Above and Below

Over the last two years, the right wing has declared war on protest in the United States. They’ve fought this struggle from the top down through police, the courts, and legislatures, and from the bottom up, through attacks by militia members, fascist groups, and lone extremists. These strategies work in tandem to challenge our movements against white supremacy, ecological destruction, police violence, and capitalism.



How do state and autonomous right-wing attacks on resistance struggles support each other? Why has the right escalated its campaign to repress protest so much over the past two years? And how should those of us fighting for freedom counter this repression?

While the state repressing protest is nothing new, the legal and legislative attacks of the last years represent a substantial escalation against resistance movements. Since the Ferguson Uprising of 2014, which forced national attention onto racist police violence, the specter of powerful and ungovernable rebellions by black communities, poor people, and radicals has inspired some and terrified others. Protestors inspired by Ferguson have blocked highways, occupied police departments, locked down and sabotaged pipelines, shut down airports, and disrupted Trump appearances.

But defenders of the economic and racial status quo have used this ferment of resistance to stoke white working-class resentment and suburban fears of disorder. Trump's enthusiastic insistence on being "the law and order candidate" capitalized on the racialized concerns stirred up by this wave of protest.

From day one, the new administration made good on its promises to crack down on protest. Over two hundred counter-inaugural demonstrators were trapped in a kettle and mass arrested, and rather than receiving customary citations or misdemeanors, now face the prospect of decades in prison simply for being caught on the street during a march. Meanwhile, hundreds of cases from Standing Rock clog the North Dakota courts, where water protectors face fines and prison terms for their efforts to prevent private companies from profiting off of the poisoning of Sioux people's water supplies.

In addition to maximizing repression through the current legal system, politicians are expanding the law to further criminalize demonstrations. [Nearly twenty state legislatures introduced anti-protest bills this year](#), ranging from troubling to outright bizarre. Arizona politicians attempted to allow the state to seize the assets of people arrested for protesting, while North Carolina legislators tried to invent something called "economic terrorism" and to force protestors to pay the cost of police efforts to repress them. North Dakota's legislature passed a litany of new bills fed to them by the pipeline industry to enable repression of protestors, ranging from allowing police to use weaponized drones against demonstrations to increasing legal penalties for a wide range of activity—which went directly into effect against hundreds of water protectors. And, especially chilling in the aftermath of Charlottesville, legislators in Florida, North Dakota, and Tennessee have attempted this year to pass bills allowing drivers to run over protestors without legal consequences.

Every one of these laws emerged as a direct response to protests that were effectively disrupting the status quo. For example, [sponsors of North Carolina's failed anti-protest bill specifically cited the ferocity of resistance in Charlotte after the police murdered Keith Lamont Jenkins](#) as their inspiration for the new law. The spread of highway blockades during the anti-police rebellions prompted a wide range of legislation targeting the obstruction of roads, including the so-called "hit and kill" bills that would allow drivers to run over protesters. In response to widespread indigenous and ecological resistance to pipeline construction and other destructive projects, several new state laws would advance penalties specifically tied to disruption of energy infrastructure. These efforts by politicians to defend the interests of their corporate cronies and police defenders testify to the threat posed by resistance movements.

But in the face of ongoing defiance against Trump and the world that makes him possible, the state isn't confident that legal methods of repression alone will be enough to hold back the tide of popular resistance. Enter autonomous fascists, stage right.

Where police and legal restrictions haven't proved sufficient to repress demonstrations, the heavily armed right wing has stepped in. Beginning in states such as Arizona with open carry laws and widespread gun culture, right-wing demonstrators had begun appearing at their own marches and rallies visibly armed, but until recent years had rarely appeared at the protests of their political opponents. Members of right-wing militias toting assault rifles, such as the ones seen in the streets of Charlottesville, debuted in the streets of Ferguson as the "Oath-Keepers." While most politicians and law enforcement officials condemned their challenge to the state's monopoly on violence—at least on the record—in some places the state is openly partnering with the grassroots extreme right. In June, the Multnomah County, Oregon Republican Party [voted to allow Three Percenters to provide anti-protestor "security" for them at events](#).

Meanwhile, the alt-right and other fascists have slowly but surely escalated from online threats and trolling to violent attacks in real life. Dylan Roof's horrific massacre at a Black church in Charleston, South Carolina in 2015 failed to spark the race war he intended, but the election of a president the following year who openly courted white nationalists provided the catalyst for increasing extreme right violence. [Numerous media outlets reported an immediate rise in racist, xenophobic, and anti-Muslim gestures since Trump's election](#), from graffiti to verbal harassment to physical assaults. Bigots have ramped up attacks on mosques from Minnesota to Tennessee, while a man spouting an Islamophobic tirade stabbed two people to death on a train in Portland, Oregon this spring.

While many of these attacks served as general intimidation against marginalized groups, protests against oppression have become a particular target for the ascendent alt-right. In 2015, heavily armed right-wingers [fired into a Black Lives Matter occupation in Minneapolis](#), injuring five protestors; a bystander noted that they “were using police tactics.” On the campaign trail, numerous Trump supporters turned violent against anti-Trump protestors, including white nationalist Matthew Heimbach, who faced criminal charges this spring for harassing a young black woman at a campaign speech. At a Seattle protest against Milo Yiannopolis in January, a right-wing shot an anti-racist protestor in the stomach after threatening online to “start cracking skulls” of “snowflakes.” Yet in the discourses of politicians, police, and media pundits, anti-fascists and anarchists remained the real villains, even as right-wing attacks continued to escalate. This obfuscation shows how their goal is not peace, nor even law and order, but the maintenance of their power against all who threaten it.

This growing crescendo of hate and violence has peaked in the horrific and cowardly killing of Heather Heyer by an alt-right zealot in Charlottesville. We cannot understand her murder outside of this context of the right-wing war on protest, which has been building inexorably towards this outcome for years. Whether through legal or illegal means, both state and autonomous fascists intend to defend their agenda of hatred and exploitation against any who would challenge it.

It’s important to emphasize that these strategies top-down and bottom-up work in tandem. If concerned right-wing citizens hadn’t taken the initiative to begin injuring and threatening protestors, politicians in [North Dakota](#) and elsewhere wouldn’t have introduced legislation to protect them. The growing Three Percenter and militia movements aim to secure the stability of Trump’s rule by force in the face of ferocious resistance. The stories we’ve heard from the streets of Charlottesville—like so many other cities before it—reveal how content the police are let fascists do their bloody work for them on the streets.

And if the fascists go too far and provoke a popular backlash, as the senseless violence of Charlottesville surely will, the state will attempt to use that to their advantage. By framing fascism and anti-fascism as symmetrical forces of chaos and disruption, as Trump has explicitly in his pathetic response, the state proposes itself as the only force capable of mediating and restoring order—through more police, more surveillance, more control. So whether tacitly supporting or openly condemning the violence of its autonomous fringes, the right wing will win either way, so long as it can keep us afraid.

Make no mistake: the people who want us to accept white supremacy, environmental destruction, and police murder are working together to keep us out of the streets. They're using every tactic they can, from mass arrests to shady new laws to outright murder, because they're afraid of our power.

They trap us in kettles and charge us with absurd felonies, or if that doesn't work, they won't stop at shooting us and running us over. Why? Because from Donald Trump to the most hardened neo-Nazi or Three Percenter, their goal is the same as Charlottesville Mayor: getting us to go home and stay there.

They have to intimidate us, because all over the United States and beyond, we are defying right wing efforts to divide and conquer us. Countless thousands of us have clogged the arteries of capital, affirmed the value of black lives against the cold brutality of the law, confronted pipelines and power plants, shielded neighbors from deportation, stood watch against bigots at mosques, defended reproductive freedom, and organized across the borders they attempt to erect on our land and in our hearts. They know that unless they can keep us afraid, they will never be able to preserve their privileges and profits at our expense.

In short, the right declared war on protest because we have the power to take them down. It won't be quick and it won't be easy, but it is possible, and they know it. They're trying to raise the costs of resistance high enough, within or outside of the law, that we'll all listen to Mayor Signer and go home, so that they can continue with their agenda of impoverishing us, scapegoating immigrants and Muslims, brutalizing people of color, subjugating women, poisoning the earth for profit, militarizing borders, and escalating police surveillance and control.

At this point, the choice is clear: stay home, or stay woke. Choose your side.

## CONCLUSION

**Alanis:** And that wraps up this episode of the Ex-Worker. Remember that you can find a full transcript, links with more information, and all of our previous episodes on our website, [crimethinc.com/podcast](https://crimethinc.com/podcast). If you've got feedback for us, updates, requests, or anything else you'd like to share, send us an email to podcast at crimethinc dot com.

You may have seen the announcement through our iTunes feed or the CrimethInc. blog describing the new [Hotwire newscast](#) we'll be debuting two weeks from now. Every Wednesday this fall, you'll get a 20–30

minute anarchist news show featuring the latest resistance news, along with repression round-ups, political prisoner birthdays, and announcements for upcoming activities that you can tap into in real life. We'll also continue to offer special reports and more in-depth analysis in Ex-Worker episodes as often as we can. Thanks for your patience as we struggle to keep loving and keep fighting in these desperate times.

Please stay posted to [crimethinc.com](http://crimethinc.com) or [itsgoingdown.org](http://itsgoingdown.org) for the latest updates about solidarity actions, which are scheduled to take place in dozens of cities across the world as we go to press.

Again, we dedicate this episode to Heather Heyer, and to all of the comrades recovering from injuries sustained in the course of resisting fascism in Charlottesville. You are in our hearts. As the Wobblies say, "Don't mourn—organize."

See you in the streets!